

**SUMMARY OF MINUTES
VIRGINIA COAL MINE SAFETY BOARD**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Harless Mullins
Joshua West
Joseph Tate
Brett Holbrook
Vicki Ratliff
Gary Prater
Chris Lester
Harry Childers

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Patti Church

OTHERS PRESENT:

Randy Moore, Chief, Div. of Mines
Mike Willis, Div. of Mines Safety Eng.
Becky Sanders, DMME
Butch Lambert, Deputy Director DMME

Meeting Called to Order

Randy Moore called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Poll of Members to Establish Quorum

Randy Moore polled the board with the following members indicating their presence and establishing a quorum of the following eight members: Brett Holbrook, Harry Childress, Gary Prater, Vicki Ratliff, Joshua West, Harless Mullins, Joseph Tate and Chris Lester.

Review and Approval of Minutes of December 14, 2017

Randy Moore called for a review of the meeting minutes of December 14, 2017, a motion and a second was made, with all in favor to approve.

Open nominations for Chairman of CMSB

Randy Moore called for nominations for the election of a Chairman. A motion and a second were made by Gary Prater and Brett Holbrook, respectively to nominate Harry Childress, with all in favor to approve.

No further nominations were made and it was determined Patti Church is to remain Co-Chairman.

Review of Virginia Coal Mine Safety Awards for 2018

Randy Moore presented information on the Virginia Coal Mine Safety Award criteria with open discussions to add to the criteria to review prior safety violations and closure notices along with the current criteria in place before being considered for any Mine Safety Awards. A motion and second was made with all being in favor to add the additional criteria.

A review (*with open discussion*) of the recommended mine safety listing(s) for the following categories were considered for the 2018 Mine Safety Award nominations:

Individual Awards

Large Underground

Medium Underground

Small Underground

Large Surface

Medium Surface

Small Surface

Underground facility working three (3) years+ without a lost time accident

Surface facility working five (5) years+ without a lost time accident

Motion(s) with second(s) were made for the nominations of the awards with a change to the recommendation for the *Large Underground* category with all in favor approving the 2018 Mine Safety Awards.

Overview of Virginia Coal Mine Safety Performance and Current Issues

Mike Willis presented overview of the Virginia Coal Mine performances and safety issues in relations to coal production, employment and wages to accidents resulting in fatalities and serious personal injury. The presentation provided statistical information for the last ten (10) years with a comparable emphasis on years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Coal production in 2018 was 13.1 million tons indicating tonnage production has held steady since 2016. Full-time employment based upon man-hours was up in 2018 by 20% from 2016 which is similar to comparison to MSHA's quarterly reporting with varying factors being used to determine each agencies employment rating. Total wages reported to Virginia Coal miners in 2018 were 200 Million; wages appear to be on the incline with 2016 being the lowest year of wages paid since 2014.

There were no fatal accidents in 2018 with the last fatality occurring in March, 2015. In the last decade, there has been significant improvement in safety issues. For other injuries reporting in man-hours loss, in comparison; Virginia is below the National Average for underground mines. The 2018 primary contributing injury for underground mines fell in the category of *fall of roof or back*.

Open discussions occurred in regards to common types of injuries with emphasis being hand/arm injuries with the utilization of the Kevlar Sleeve as well as injuries resulting from Roof Bolters. Randy Moore stressed concerns on the continued approved use of the Kevlar Sleeve in lieu of the most recent injuries with its use and the likelihood of the sleeve getting caught in the steel. Mike Willis indicated he would obtain statistical data on the number of roof bolter hand/arm injuries in comparison to other type of injuries with Randy Moore indicating there could be an increased awareness from the inspectors and technical people to this area.

Today, enhanced technology has allowed mining to occur in areas previously unobtainable therefore; grant funds are being explored to assist in increased awareness training with the use of

simulators or possible virtual reality training. It is the department's desire to take the training trailer directly to the mine sites to coincide with the proper utilization of the enhanced technology to prevent injury.

Virginia surface mine injuries are slightly above the national average due to the reporting requirements with the most common surface mine injury fell into the category of *slip and fall* and the second being *machinery*.

Mills and Plants have had an increase in the reportable injuries in 2018 with the most common from the *handling of materials* and is equivalent to the national average; previous years have indicated way under the national average.

Mike Willis noted in regards to the data provided, the board needs to consider a comparable analysis with MSHA; there is a variance of current reporting requirements with MSHA's definition of a serious personal injury versus Virginia's. Currently Virginia's definition of a serious personal injury means the reporting of *any injury*.

Randy Moore stated there have been significant differences in life saving measures since the implementation of the requirement of having oxygen readily available in mines in case of injury.

The primary complaint investigated last year was substance abuse, with increased cases in the last six (6) months. Drug testing has been changed from urine to hair testing, which provides a higher sensitivity for detection. Randy Moore stated the random testing on the sites seems to be with specific crews.

Approximately 1200 violations were written in 2018, with close to 100 of those issued to contractors. Twenty-four (24) were individual violations with the most common being improper examinations or not following approved plan.

Mining near Gas Well have slightly increased.

Division of Mines staffing has a forty-one (41) positions with seven (7) of these positions being vacant. There are approximately eight (8) staff members nearing retirement. The DMME Mine Rescue Team made thirty-two (32) mine visits in 2018 with over 3500 hours training in 2018 and also placing or winning in the VMI contest and the IMCC continuing education category, respectively. DMME staff member Wayne Davis was awarded the 2018 Governor's Career Achievement Award.

The 2018 initiatives made were accomplished with ongoing efforts to continue with the electrical assistance at mineral mining sites and internal risk evaluations.

The 2019 initiatives are to fill three (3) approved positions, continue assistance at the mineral mines, dust exposure issues with surface and underground mines and as previously indicated the safety issues with the Kevlar Sleeves.

Discussion of Implementation of New Coal Mine Safety Laws and Regulations

Randy Moore stated new law books are being updated by the Board of Coal Mining Examiners and the board is currently working with the Attorney General for assistance to writing in the regulations if individuals have issues such as being revoked in Kentucky or West Virginia then it would carry over into Virginia.

Open Agenda

An ongoing investigation of an accident occurring at Deep Mine #41 is anticipated to be completed in several weeks.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.

Minutes prepared by: D. Gibson, Hearings & Legal Services Officer I